

COLONISATION BY THE MARKET: WALZER ON RECOGNITION*

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1 The question of market boundaries

Debates about the market amongst political theorists have mainly concerned its superiority or otherwise to the state as the primary means of economic organisation. But even were the market to emerge victorious in this theoretical contest, there would remain a further set of issues to be addressed. These concern its proper scope or range of application: where, and on what grounds, are the lines to be drawn between those social practices that properly belong to the market domain, and those that do not? We may call this the question of 'market boundaries'.

Without attempting an exhaustive classification, a distinction may usefully be drawn between two kinds of reason for limiting the scope of the market domain. One is essentially *distributive*: it focuses on the possible injustice of allowing the distribution of certain items (eg health-care, housing etc) to be determined by the operation of the market. The other concerns the possible effects of the market on the nature of various human *goods*: it focuses on the damage that may be done to these when their production and/or exchange takes place through the market. Obvious examples of this latter kind include objections to the sale and purchase of sexual and reproductive 'services', or to the commercialisation of blood and organ donation, on the grounds that these are destructive of certain social relationships which are significant sources of human well-being.

However, as I shall suggest in the main sections of this paper, arguments for market limitations of this second kind need also to consider less obvious ways in which the market may threaten the integrity of human goods. For this may occur not only through their being produced and/or exchanged in the form of commodities, but also through their character being affected (or infected) by social meanings derived from the market domain. The example I shall use to illustrate this is the human good of *recognition*. But I will also suggest that the harm done to recognition in this way may have equally damaging effects on a wide range of social institutions and practices through which many *other* human goods are typically generated and sustained.

The argument will be presented mainly through a critical commentary on Michael Walzer's account of recognition in chapter 11 of *Spheres of Justice*¹, having first considered both his overall view of social justice and his specific discussion of the problem of market boundaries. As will be seen, whilst Walzer's approach to this problem largely reflects his particular concern with issues of distributive justice (albeit conceived in an unusual way), his more general concern with 'the separation of spheres', and with the specificity of human goods and their social meanings, also provides a fruitful basis for the kind of non-distributive argument about market boundaries I shall be presenting here.

2 Justice and the separation of spheres

* First published in the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 5, 1997, pp. 93-107, and reprinted in my *Cultural Goods and the Limits of the Market*, London: Palgrave 2000, pp. 70-85; the argument in section 6 about the function of recognition in scientific institutions is developed further in 'Science and Recognition', *ibid.*, pp. 86-107.

¹ Walzer 1983: all page-references in the main text and footnotes are to this, unless otherwise specified.

For Walzer, the need to establish and maintain effective boundaries around the market is dictated by one of the key requirements of social justice, namely the prevention of *dominance*. The concept of dominance is specified in the following way: "I call a good dominant if the individuals who have it, because they have it, can command a wide range of other goods" (p.10); and the principle forbidding such dominance is this: *No social good x should be distributed to men and women who possess some other good y merely because they possess y and without regard to the meaning of x*" (p.20)

The concept of dominance points to a central feature of Walzer's approach to the nature of social justice: his insistence on the qualitatively distinct and incommensurable character of the various 'social goods' with whose proper distribution any theory of justice must be concerned. For Walzer, the heterogeneity of these goods - money and wealth, political power and office, love and friendship, knowledge and expertise, health and security, religious salvation, and so on - makes it thoroughly implausible to believe that the requirements of justice can be specified in the form of any single principle or systematic set of principles, such as those proposed by Rawls, Nozick and their numerous predecessors. Instead, he suggests, each such good should be distributed on the basis of the criterion or criteria implicit in its specific (though historically and culturally variable) 'social meaning'.

The heterogeneity of social goods is reflected in that of the social *spheres* in which these goods are conceived, created, distributed and enjoyed. For Walzer, modern societies are characterised by a high degree of differentiation between various domains or spheres within which distinctive kinds of social activities take place: the economy, the political system, the family, education, welfare, religion, etc. Thus if each social good is to be distributed in accordance with its appropriate criteria, it is essential that these different spheres be kept 'separate' from one another in the following respect: the distribution of one sphere's social goods must not be permitted to determine that of another's. One must not, that is, be able to 'convert' one kind of social good into another; for if this is possible, it is (almost) certain that the latter will have been acquired on some basis other than that which is appropriate to its specific social meaning.

Thus to avoid such 'dominance' of one social good over another, the various spheres must themselves be prevented from improper forms of influence upon each other: clearly defined boundaries must be placed around them. In contemporary/modern societies, in Walzer's view, it is the market economy - or what he terms 'the sphere of money and commodities' - that poses the greatest threat to justice, conceived in this way, for it is the greatest potential (and actual) source of domination:

One can conceive of the market [if one is not careful, that is] as a sphere without boundaries, an unzoned city - for money is insidious, and market relations are expansive. A radically *laissez-faire* economy would be like a totalitarian state, invading every other sphere, dominating every other distributive process. It would transform every social good into a commodity. This is market imperialism (pp.119-20).²

Walzer is thus concerned to show how modern societies can or do manage to control these imperialistic - or, as I shall call them, *colonizing* - tendencies of the market. One device to which he attributes considerable

² One should note also the converse possibility of colonisation or domination *of* the market *by* other spheres, which in Walzer's view is equally undesirable.

significance is that of 'blocked exchanges': legally or socially enforced prohibitions on the use of money to acquire a wide range of specific social goods.³ The set of such proscribed commodities thus serves to mark out the boundaries of the market sphere. Amongst such currently non-purchasable items he notes the following: human beings; divine grace; political influence, votes and office; prizes, honours and all outcomes of verdicts based on criteria of desert; marriage partners, love and friendship; harmful or dangerous goods and services such as drugs and homicide; and many others (pp.100-103).⁴

But as Walzer recognises, even a fully effective set of such blocked exchanges will not by itself rule out the possibility of market dominance. This can be seen, *inter alia*, by considering the relationship between political office and economic wealth. Prohibiting the former's direct sale and purchase will be insufficient to prevent the latter's distribution illicitly affecting the outcome of political processes. In such cases, one might say, political office, and/or the influence and power attached to it, are being *indirectly* purchased. Walzer suggests a number of means by which such kinds of market dominance might be controlled, but I shall not consider these here.

Instead, I shall point to the possible significance of a quite different form of market colonisation, which consists in what might be called an illicit or inappropriate 'transfer of *meanings*' from the market sphere to others. This may take place without the affected items in these other spheres becoming either directly or indirectly purchasable, and hence cannot be prevented by a system of blocked exchanges, even more broadly conceived.⁵

Consider, for example, the political sphere. Walzer, as we have seen, warns against its potential colonisation by the sphere of money and commodities through what I have termed the 'indirect purchase' of political power and office: the tendency for those with greater wealth to end up with greater political influence. This leads to injustice - in the form of domination - since the distribution of wealth is being illicitly 'converted' into that of political power, thereby subverting the distributive criteria appropriate to the political sphere.

But one might also wish to guard against a quite different danger: that the market might colonise the political sphere by re-shaping the meaning of the political process in its own image. Then one might find, for example, that voters come to be conceived as consumers whose preferences must be satisfied, rather than as citizens whose beliefs must be respected; that political parties shape their policies by drawing on the outcomes of market research rather than by reflective debate about the good society; and that political argumentation is displaced by the promotional and marketing techniques of commercial enterprises.⁶ What would be objectionable about the effects of such 'transfers of meaning' would not primarily be their distributive injustice - though they might also lead to this. Rather, it would consist in the degradation of the (democratic) political process, and hence of the kinds of social goods and sources of human well-being previously made available through this.

That the colonisation of one sphere by another might take such a form is implied by a comment made by Walzer in the opening chapter of *Spheres*: "Dominance", he says, "describes a way of using social goods that isn't limited by their intrinsic meanings *or that shapes those meanings in its own image*" (pp.10-11: my italics). But he

³ Another part of his solution I shall not discuss here: it concerns the internal organization of large-scale capitalist firms which, he argues, should be reconstructed as co-operatively owned and controlled 'socialist' enterprises so as to prevent economic power illicitly being translated into political power at the micro-level.

⁴ For critical responses which focus *inter alia* on the problematic heterogeneity of this list, see Andre 1995 and Waldron 1995.

⁵ See Anderson 1990 for a similarly oriented concern with the illicit transfer of market meanings.

gives little attention to this latter (italicised) possibility in his discussion of the colonising tendencies of the market sphere. Yet, as I shall now argue, his later account of *recognition* may be seen to provide a striking example of just such a 'shaping of meaning in its own image' by the market, the critical implications of which go largely unremarked.

3 Private recognition

Walzer begins his account of recognition by contrasting the nature and forms of recognition to be found in modern and pre-modern societies. In hierarchical societies such as feudal Europe, he says, the recognition accorded to any individual was determined largely by the particular *rank* to which they belonged, reflected in the specific title by which they were to be addressed. Such ranks and titles were themselves typically indicated by particular kinds of clothing, socially enforced rules of deference - about who has to bow to whom - and so on.⁷

A key feature of this system, for Walzer, is that the acts of recognition accorded to people were not, as he puts it "freely given" (p.250). There was no choice about giving a person the recognition appropriate to their rank; nor did this involve people making independent judgments about the merits, achievements etc of the individuals concerned. Thus:

Recognitions depend not upon independent judgments but upon social pre-judgments, embodied in names like "goodman", "esquire", "sir", "lord" (and "lord bishop"). And what reality lies behind these names we are not to talk about. (p.251).

This pre-modern system of recognition, Walzer suggests, provides almost everyone with a considerable degree of security. To see why this is so, one needs to notice that, despite his tendency elsewhere in *Spheres* to doubt the existence (or at least the relevance) of cultural universals, Walzer here seems to imply both that there is a universal human need for recognition, and that this is typically met through people's ability to make favourable comparisons between themselves and others. There is thus a universal 'struggle for recognition' - the Hegelian phrase is used, inter alia, as the title for the opening section of this chapter of *Spheres*.

In pre-modern, hierarchical societies the potentially anxiety-inducing and de-stabilising effects of this competitive struggle for recognition are largely held in check. For in such societies, pretty well everyone is guaranteed such recognition precisely through the system of *unfreely* given 'social pre-judgments' based on rank. In *modern* societies, by contrast, there is in effect just a single rank, and hence a single title - of 'mister' or the like.⁸ But since their members still need and/or desire to be recognised via their relative superiority to others, what emerges is a competitive struggle between them as individuals - what Walzer refers to often as 'the Hobbesian race'. Each tries to win recognition from others, and by any available means: they bargain with one another (though each is unwilling to give their recognition to the other, since they thereby risk diminishing their own standing); they extort; they cheat; they deceive etc - they do anything they can get away with to secure this valued prize.

⁶ Cf the contrast between conceptions of the political domain as a market and a forum in Elster 1986, and between consumers and citizens in Sagoff 1988.

⁷ In this system, he says, rank is dominant over recognition, and may in turn be dominated by blood, wealth or political power: see p.250.

⁸ As Walzer notes (p.252), the absence of a single title for/including women is of considerable significance here.

Yet in practice the prize can rarely be secured - it remains fragile, impermanent, always vulnerable both to new bases of comparison and to the changing opinions of each person and their actions held by others. Modern recognition, as one might say, is a social good with all too brief a shelf-life; it is also inherently scarce, given its positional or relational character. Hence its pursuit is a highly anxiety-ridden enterprise.

Clearly, there are marked conceptual similarities between this modern form of recognition - which I shall henceforth call *private* recognition - and the acquisition and exchange of commodities in a competitive, free market economy. 'Despite' the fact that private recognition cannot literally be bought or sold, there is (what Weberians would refer to as) a 'congruence of meaning' between the two, and hence at least a *prima facie* case for regarding this as a colonisation of the sphere of recognition by the market.⁹ Indeed, Walzer himself draws attention to such similarities:

The competitors [for private recognition] speculate on the market, intrigue against near rivals, and bargain for small gains: I'll admire you if you'll admire me. They exercise power, spend money, display goods, give gifts, spread gossip, stage performances - all for the sake of recognition. And having done all this, they do it all again, reading their daily gains and losses in the eyes of their fellows, like a stockbroker with his morning paper" (p.253);

and likewise:

I have been writing about the sphere of recognition as if it were a free enterprise system. Honors are like commodities; they circulate among individuals through exchange, extortion and gift; supply is only clumsily and inadequately responsive to demand. There is no welfare state, no guaranteed minimum (beyond the bare acknowledgment that every individual is a competitor) (p.259).

Yet Walzer does not express any serious misgivings about this system of private recognition. Quite the contrary - for instance, the passage just quoted continues immediately as follows: "*And this appears to be the best possible arrangement*" (p.259: my italics). Why should this be so? What seems to attract Walzer about this 'arrangement' is that in it, and by contrast to its hierarchical predecessor, the acts of recognition are 'freely given'. They are not required by a person's rank: they are not social pre-judgments but independent ones. Thus in modern societies, the sphere of recognition becomes increasingly autonomous - no longer dominated by rank or other spheres.

Correspondingly, the only worry that Walzer expresses here is that in actual modern societies, this system of private recognition has not yet achieved its ideal form. For one still finds individuals being able to acquire recognition merely by virtue of, for example, the relative *status* of their respective occupations (pp.256-7). In such cases, for Walzer, individuals are not yet being recognised in ways that altogether exclude social pre-judgment, and so there is still some unwelcome degree of dominance over the sphere of recognition by other spheres, eg by wealth and education. The situation is thus partly analogous to the dominance of recognition by

⁹ A fully-fledged colonisation thesis would, though, require historical/causal claims about the direction and 'mechanism' of the postulated transfer of meanings which I will not try to support here. It might be noted, however, that whilst Walzer's depiction of modern (private) recognition often draws upon Hobbes's writings, its historical emergence as a social reality is arguably far more recent than this might suggest.

rank in pre-modern societies: people manage to convert other social goods into recognition, thereby distorting its proper distribution. But once these pre-modern residues have finally been eliminated, all will be well in the brave new world of private recognition.

I shall argue later that this rosy picture of private (and arguably *privatised*) recognition needs to be challenged, and indeed partly for reasons that are implicitly provided by Walzer's own discussion of what he calls the 'reflexive' forms of recognition, namely self-esteem and self-respect. But first I shall consider his account of a second, and quite distinct form of recognition which, he suggests, exists alongside that of private recognition in modern societies. This he calls (the system of) 'public honor and individual desert': I shall call it simply *public* recognition.

4 Public recognition

Public recognition consists in the award of special honours, prizes and the like for people's exceptional achievements, distinguished service, outstanding performance and so on, both by the state (eg US congressional medals) and by various private associations and societies (such as the Nobel prize for literature). The key feature of such awards is that they must be based on what people are deemed actually to *deserve*, with the merit of what they have done being judged by reference to specified standards or criteria.¹⁰ Thus public recognition does not rely merely on *opinions*, on what people happen to think or feel about someone's actions without any need to justify these attitudes. Rather, its conferral is based on *judgments*: some serious, albeit often imperfect attempt must be made to arrive at the truth, and mere opinion is not enough. Hence Walzer likens such judgments to the verdicts of a jury - and correspondingly treats punishment as the 'other (negative) side' of the public recognition coin (pp.268-72).

So although public recognition shares with its private counterpart the elements of competition, comparison and positional scarcity, it differs crucially in being, as I shall term it, *objectively* rather than *subjectively* conferred. But Walzer also glosses this contrast in a somewhat different way: he says that, by contrast with private recognition, public recognition is not *freely* given. For whereas the judgments involved in public recognition are, as it were, constrained by the requirement of justification, by the need to demonstrate their conformity to the relevant standards or criteria, no such constraints are operative in the case of private recognition: opinion is free, whilst judgment is not (pp.258-9).

As I shall argue shortly, this feature of private recognition indicates a further level at which its meaning-congruence with the market (suggested in the previous section) may be understood. But first it should be noted - as Walzer does not - that the kind of freedom being attributed here to private recognition is quite different from that referred to earlier in distinguishing pre-modern from (private) modern recognition. For in that context, the 'unfreedom' of pre-modern recognition was said to consist, not in its being bound by the requirement of justification, but in its being based on a person's rank, and hence in its exclusion of any role for 'independent', ie *socially* 'uncoerced' judgment of that individual's conduct or achievements.

Thus public recognition does not lack the same kind of freedom that pre-modern recognition lacks by contrast with the private modern form. Consequently, there is no inconsistency between recognition being both 'freely given', in the sense of not being socially coerced by the rules of rank, yet also 'objective', ie based on

¹⁰ Walzer notes that such awards don't have to go to the best, ie the most outstanding, but only to all those who stand out; and he agrees with Rousseau that the virtues of ordinary people may also deserve such recognition, whilst insisting that this must nonetheless remain a special accolade: see p.265.

judgments which are constrained by the requirement of justification - and hence 'unfree' in the sense in which the merely subjective opinion of private recognition is 'free'. And this possibility - of recognition which is objective yet socially uncoerced - is an important one to keep in mind if one regards the subjective freedom of private recognition as having little to be said for it, whilst not wishing to return, as it were, to its pre-modern counterpart.

Turning now to the additional level of meaning-congruence between private recognition and the market indicated by the former's subjective character, my suggestion is this: that there is a significant conceptual parallel between the freely given 'mere opinions' upon which private recognition is based, and the 'mere preferences' of consumers in a market economy. Consumers are not required to justify their preferences for the various items they wish to purchase: all that matters is what they 'happen' to want, and the soundness or otherwise of the beliefs upon which such wishes may be based has no significance. These beliefs, then, are regarded as 'mere opinions', rather than judgments making claims to truth, just as the bases of acts of private recognition are. And both are thus 'freely given', not only in the sense of being socially unconstrained, but also of being unconstrained by the requirement of justification.

So whereas the conceptual parallel between private recognition and the market noted in the previous section referred to the manner in which such recognition is pursued (as a competitive struggle for the acquisition of commodities etc), this additional parallel refers to the way in which private recognition is typically conferred: by acts which may be as arbitrary or subjective as the preferences of consumers. The value of whatever gains private recognition is determined solely by the preferences of those who confer it, whether these are based on good reasons, bad reasons or none, just as that of products in the market is by the opinions of consumers. In neither case are objective judgments expected or required.¹¹

Of course, the existence of such meaning-congruence between private recognition and the market does not by itself show that the former has in fact been colonised by the latter. To establish this one would have also to provide historical evidence of the requisite 'transfer of meanings' from one to the other, and to demonstrate that the congruence was not the effect of some other process responsible for the character of both.¹² More importantly, for my purposes here, even an adequately supported colonisation thesis would have no obvious normative implications: it is one thing to claim that modern recognition displays the effects of market-colonisation, and quite another that there is something undesirable or damaging about this. In the following two sections I shall try to support this latter claim by considering some implications of Walzer's account of what he calls the 'reflexive' forms of recognition.

5 Self-respect and self-esteem

Walzer concludes his discussion of recognition by considering its reflexive forms, namely *self-esteem* and *self-respect*. The meanings of these terms are, he suggests, clearly distinguished in ordinary language, despite the failure of many contemporary philosophers to notice this. The former consists in having a favourable appreciation or

¹¹ Of course, consumers may in fact have good reasons for their preferences, but the market itself, as it were, treats both the existence and the merits of such reasons with studied indifference. This indifference is mirrored at the theoretical level by the refusal of economists to make judgments about consumer preferences - often appealing to some form of meta-ethical scepticism which denies the possibility of such judgments being made 'objectively': see Keat 1994.

¹² For example, it might be argued that this congruence is a result or expression of the growth of 'mass society'. Against this, my own guess would be that the subjectivity of private recognition is due to the long-run tendency

opinion of oneself, whilst the latter involves a *proper* regard for the dignity of one's person or position (p.274). Thus whereas for self-esteem, all that matters is that the appreciation be favourable, whether or not it is soundly based, for self-respect this is not enough: such regard must be deserved or justified, not merely a matter of opinion.

Working with this distinction, one might expect Walzer - as the good Hegelian he (often) is - to suggest that self-esteem and self-respect are essentially internalisations of, and hence dependent upon, non-reflexive counterparts: respectively, private and public recognition. But whilst this expectation is fulfilled in the case of self-esteem and private recognition, it is only partly so for self-respect and public recognition. For Walzer says that although self-respect "more nearly resembles the system of public honour and dishonour than the Hobbesian race" (ie than it resembles private recognition: p.278), it nonetheless differs in not being inherently relational or comparative in character, which is an essential feature of (both private and) public recognition. Thus self-respect does not depend on one's (sense of) being regarded as superior to others, as outstanding or exceptional. This is because it can be achieved by acting in ways that meet standards or norms which, at least in principle, everyone is able to meet, rather than an inevitably limited few.

Walzer illustrates this feature of self-respect through some remarks by Tawney about the professional code and honour of teachers (pp.274-5). Amongst them there is a shared understanding of the value and purposes of their activity, and hence also of the various things that 'no self-respecting teacher' could permit themselves, or be permitted by their peers, to do - eg to allow differences in their pupils' class or income to affect how they perform this role. There are norms and standards here by reference to which the conduct of teachers may be judged, both by themselves and others. But these do not serve, at least primarily, as the basis for comparative judgments and special awards stemming from competitive processes; rather, they indicate how any teacher may be expected (both predictively and normatively) to act. Hence self-respect grounded in this way is potentially available for every teacher; and the same applies to the members of numerous other professional or occupational groups and the like.

Walzer goes on to suggest that there is also available, in modern societies, a more nearly universal basis for self-respect, related to its members' shared status as democratic *citizens*. But I shall not pursue this here.¹³ Instead, I shall point to an implication of his claims about self-respect for his earlier account of modern recognition; and in light of this, consider why it is that the private, 'market-congruent' form of recognition is potentially so damaging.

What is implied by Walzer's view of self-respect is that there must be a *third* form of recognition in modern societies, alongside the private and public ones. For if individuals are to have a (proper) sense of their meeting the standards of the profession or suchlike to which they belong, they must rely primarily on others' judgments rather than their own, and hence on their *recognition* by others as, for instance, decent and competent teachers.¹⁴ Thus unlike private recognition, but like public recognition, this third form is based on objective

of (at least consumerist forms of) the market to generate a more widespread culture of subjectivism about values, of which private recognition is one manifestation.

¹³ One might doubt, for instance, whether democratic citizenship can be expected to bear this weight for most people: perhaps the main bases for self-respect will typically be found in social practices of the kind already noted.

¹⁴ Walzer himself notes that "other people *can* judge...whether I have a right to respect myself" (p.274, my italics): my point is the somewhat stronger one that such judgments, and hence the relevant form of recognition, are typically *required*.

judgments: these are 'freely given' in the sense of being socially uncoerced, but not of being subjective. However, unlike both private and public recognition, there is nothing inherently comparative or relational about this form of recognition, which is potentially available to anyone whose conduct conforms to the relevant criteria. Thus self-respect *does* have a non-reflexive counterpart, upon which it depends: an objective but non-relational form of recognition.

But suppose now that the sphere of recognition were to be colonised by the market, through the kind of meaning-transfer process referred to earlier. Then, given the congruence of meaning between private recognition and the market, private recognition would come to predominate; and this would undermine the objective, non-relational form of recognition just identified, replacing it with the competitive struggle for favourable yet merely subjective opinion. Such a development, it may be argued, would be highly unwelcome, for at least two, quite different reasons.

First, and more obviously, the possibility of achieving *self-respect* would be endangered, since private recognition cannot provide the kind of recognition upon which this depends. In effect, self-respect would be replaced by self-esteem, since the former's requirement of a *proper*, ie justified, sense of one's worth would no longer be met. And as Walzer sometimes indicates, self-esteem is in many respects a less valuable achievement than self-respect. For ultimately one obtains little real benefit from recognition based merely on opinion, since it may well turn out not to be worth the paper it's written on - and all the more so if the favourable attitudes upon which self-esteem is based have been extracted by trickery, bargaining and the like.¹⁵

But there is also a second, and less obvious reason for greeting the 'privatisation' of recognition with some hostility. As I shall argue below, the existence of what I have termed objective, non-relational recognition may be necessary for the proper functioning of a wide range of social institutions and practices, through which the various social goods with whose just distribution Walzer is concerned are themselves 'produced'. Conversely, therefore, private recognition may be an unsuitable basis, not only for the self-respect of individuals, but also for the effective organisation and conduct of the kinds of social activities whose standards and norms, according to Walzer, enable self-respect to be achieved. Hence the privatisation of recognition may threaten the continued existence of the social goods made available to others through such activities, quite apart from the self-respect of their participants.

6 Recognition, practices and social goods

To see why this is so, one must first note that recognition, and/or the possibility of achieving it, is by no means confined to a single sphere. Rather, it is something that may be achieved in many spheres, through engagement in a wide range of specific social activities and institutions. Admittedly, Walzer himself sometimes talks as if this were not so. He refers, for example to "*the* sphere of recognition" (p.258, my italics), and even considers what 'complex equality' *in* this 'sphere' would involve (pp.257-8). But this is misleading. Complex equality concerns the relations that obtain *between* spheres; it cannot obtain *within* one. To be consistent here, one should instead talk of the implications of complex equality *for* the distribution of the various forms and bases of recognition that arise in *each* sphere.

For Walzer, as I suggested above, the significance of (what I have termed) objective, non-relational recognition - henceforth, 'recognition' *simpliciter* - would consist mainly in its contribution to self-respect. But one

can also consider its significance, in many if not all spheres, for the successful conduct of the various social activities that take place within them, such as those of teaching and numerous other occupations and professions. To understand this significance, I suggest, it will be helpful to regard such activities as typically displaying the characteristics of what MacIntyre has termed *practices*. A practice, he says, is:

...any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended;

and he cites as (at least potential) examples of practices, activities such as farming, architecture, portrait-painting, music, chess, football, engagement in the various sciences and humanities, and so on.¹⁶

As MacIntyre notes, the participants in a practice are partly motivated by their enjoyment of its internal goods; and since these internal goods are constituted as such by reference to the standards and goals of the practice, their pursuit and enjoyment by participants inclines them to act in ways that are conducive to the maintenance of the practice's standards and the realisation of its goals. However, it may be argued, the successful operation of a practice may well require additional sources or forms of motivation and commitment on the part of its participants: their enjoyment of internal goods alone may not be sufficient to ensure that they act in practice-enhancing, rather than practice-antithetical ways.

Why this should be so is a complex matter.¹⁷ But I suggest that one important reason is that, in many circumstances, there is a certain 'cost' in acting consistently with a practice's standards and goals: a considerable degree of effort is required, sacrifices must be made, one's immediate inclinations and self-interest ignored, and so on. Since this is so, the participants in a practice will typically wish to be *recognised* for their often costly performance of practice-enjoined tasks (though there may also be an independent source of this desire). It will not be enough for them to know that what they have done contributes to the practice's goals, and to enjoy the internal goods consequent upon meeting its standards of excellence. They will also desire some kind of recognition; in its absence they will feel resentful, and increasingly disinclined to conduct themselves in the ways required by the practice's own 'well-being'.¹⁸ What might be called 'strains of commitment' will emerge, and become too strong to resist: at least in the long run, failure to provide recognition for participants' contributions and performance will undermine the integrity of the practice.

So in order to maintain the commitment of participants to the goals and standards of a practice, some form or system of recognition may well be necessary. But equally, of course, such recognition must only be accorded on the basis of conduct that *does* contribute to the integrity and success of the practice. Participants

¹⁵ Correspondingly, Walzer notes how people try to convince themselves that their self-esteem *is* justified, though often by rather desperate - and perhaps ultimately unsatisfactory since self-defeating - means: see p.278.

¹⁶ MacIntyre 1981, pp.175-6.

¹⁷ MacIntyre himself refers to the necessary role of institutions in sustaining practices, and to the former's use of 'external' goods such as money, power etc: see MacIntyre 1981, p.181, and Keat 1991, pp.219-22. The argument I present below implies that recognition should be seen as a crucial 'mediator' between the internal and external goods of institutionally organised practices.

¹⁸ For example, the centrality of institutionally supported forms of recognition in maintaining the integrity of *scientific* activities is strongly argued in Hagstrom 1965 and Ravetz 1971.

must be sufficiently motivated, but motivated exclusively towards activities which maintain or enhance the practice: they must not be able to achieve recognition for practice-antithetical conduct. What this implies, I shall now suggest, is that such recognition should not display the characteristics of its *private* form. Thus any tendency towards the 'colonisation of recognition by the market' will endanger the effective operation of practices, and hence also their continued ability to generate their specific social goods.¹⁹

Private recognition is antithetical to the integrity of practices for a number of closely related reasons. First, it is achieved on the basis of 'opinions' rather than 'judgments': it does not matter to the recipient of such recognition whether such favourable opinions are well-founded, only that they are favourable.²⁰ Nor does it matter by what means it is achieved - for example, by the trading of favours, deception etc. By contrast, the recognition required by successfully operating practices must be accorded only on the basis of judgments made by reference to the practice's own standards, and must not be acquired through inappropriate trading (whether literal or metaphorical) or deceit.

Second, private recognition is pursued directly: the aim of achieving it operates as a primary motivation for the actions concerned, just as the acquisition of money or commodities operates in market activities. By contrast, I would argue, recognition in practices works best when it is conferred upon activities which, whilst contributing to the practice's goals, are not primarily motivated by the desire to achieve recognition. This is because, once gaining recognition becomes a dominant aim, it is all too easy for those who pursue it to become more concerned about gaining 'a favourable opinion' than by whether this is merited in terms of the practice's standards: any means will do. In practices, by contrast, whilst the absence of recognition may breed resentment, its achievement is not the direct aim of the participant's conduct.

Finally, the competitive and relational character of private recognition makes it unsuited to, and a potential danger for, a properly functioning practice. For not only does this bring with it the kinds of risks already noted, due to the willingness 'to gain recognition at any cost' (to the practice); it also makes recognition necessarily the achievement of only a few, whereas the successful operation of practices depends crucially on the efforts and contributions of all, and upon their being properly recognised.²¹

Private recognition, then, is ill-suited to the proper functioning of practices; what they instead require is the kind of recognition which also, as suggested above, provides a basis for self-respect. Thus Tawney's previously mentioned comments about teachers can now be cast in a different light: there are indeed 'things that no self-respecting teacher will do', and if teachers actually do such things they may not only lose their self-respect but also damage the practice of teaching. It is therefore essential that the practice of teaching is organised in such

¹⁹ This is not to deny that market activities may themselves require some non-private form of recognition: that private recognition displays meaning-congruence with the market does not imply that it is the form of recognition involved in the conduct of commercial enterprises in a market economy.

²⁰ Of course this *does* 'matter' to them in the sense that, ultimately, private recognition can support only (the lesser good of) self-esteem rather than self-respect. But what I am concerned to point to, here, are the damaging effects upon practices - rather than upon their participants - when the kind of recognition pursued (and which indeed may be the only kind readily available) takes on a privatised, subjective character. See, for example, the discussion of the damaging effects on science of the pursuit of recognition through engagement in merely 'fashionable' areas of research in Hagstrom 1967.

²¹ There may also be some role in practices for the 'special awards' of Walzer's public recognition (which are likewise threatened by the subjectivity of private recognition): my claim is only that these should not be the sole or primary form of recognition. In the case of science, for example, it is arguable that undue emphasis upon the pursuit of such special awards contributes to the occurrence of scientific fraud.

a way that it provides for its members the appropriate form of recognition. In doing so it not only contributes to the self-respect of teachers; it also supports the integrity of the practice itself, and hence its ability to generate and sustain the social good(s) which it makes available to others.²²

So if, as I suggested earlier, private recognition may be seen as a case of market colonisation, and if one values the social goods that are generated by practices requiring a non-privatised form of recognition, then a significant reason for objecting to market colonisation has been identified. Unlike the kinds of market colonisation which Walzer himself addresses, it involves neither the direct nor indirect purchase of the specific goods produced by such practices, but instead an 'illicit transfer of meanings'. Further, what is objectionable here is not a matter of distributive (in)justice.

Thus Walzer's insistence on 'the separation of spheres', and in particular on maintaining boundaries around the market, is given an additional and distinct rationale. It is not only that market colonisation may lead to an unjust distribution of goods whose social meanings require them to be distributed on some other basis. For it may also undermine the integrity of practices in the colonised spheres, and hence their continued ability to generate the very social goods with the proper distribution of which Walzer is primarily concerned.²³

Finally, I suggest, the contrast between these two kinds of reason for opposing market colonisation points to a more general issue about how one should interpret another central tenet of *Spheres*, namely the 'social' nature of human goods. For Walzer, the goods which individuals aim at acquiring, to enhance their own well-being, are constituted *as* such, as possible objects of individuals' aims, in essentially social ways (pp.6-10). Correspondingly, he represents the various spheres of modern societies as sites for the conception, creation and distribution of equally various, qualitatively distinct social goods. With these claims I broadly agree. But what is implied by the argument I have presented is that a properly social account of human goods should be concerned not only with their conception and distribution, but also with the social conditions *for* their creation: in particular, with the institutional and other requirements for the integrity of those social practices through which these goods are actually created - and sustained, fostered, developed and so on. Thus the possible dangers of market colonisation must be examined in terms not only of its distributive consequences, but also of its effects on the social conditions for the creation of human goods.

²² See Ravetz 1971 for an account of how the emergence of inappropriately based forms of recognition serves to undermine the 'quality-control' systems of organised science, and hence its ability to produce the social good of scientific knowledge.

²³ See also Keat 1991 and 1993 for a different argument to the same conclusion, via the effects of introducing commercially modelled forms of organisation into previously non-commercial practices.

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